THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) The cost of construction of new Railway line depends on terrain, geological feautres, standard of formation and track, cost of labour and material etc. It varies from place to place. The present day cost of constructin of new line on a average is about Rs. 2.5 to 3 crores per km in plain area. This includes cost of procurement of rails also. The completion of ongoing new line works require about Rs. 23,000 crs. beyond 1.4.2002.

The cost of renewals of tracks depends upon gauge of the line, track structure, importance of the route, cost of labour, machinery etc. However, Rs. 12,500 crore approx. would be required to replace the track that was due for renewal as on 1.4.02.

(b) As on 1.4.2002,11470 km track on BG and 5089 km on MG and NG was due for revewal. during 2001 -02, a non-lapsable Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF) of Rs. 17,000 cr. has been set up for clearing the backlog of repacement of over-aged assets, which also includes track renewals. The backlog is expected to be cleared by March, 2007.

Condition of track is continuously monitored and repairs are carried out whenever required to ensure safety.

Railtel Project

1156. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railtel Project of the Railways has been commissioned and become operational;

(b) if so, total cost involved and the revenue expected from the project;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Railways have decided to shelve the project; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Railtel corporate of India Limited has been formed as a Government Company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways and started functining to create a

nationwide braodband telecom and multimedia network by laying optical fibre cable along the Railway track and provide modern comunication system to improve Railway's operation and safety and bring in additional revenue by marketing surplus telecom capacity.

(b) the Detailed Project Report envisages an estimated expenditure of Rs. 2500 crore (approximately) for creation of 35,000 km optical fibre cable based network and an estimated earning of Rs. 1600 crore in the fifth year of operation.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Recovery from railway catering/vending stalls

1157. SHRIG AYA SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the relevant factors were taken into consideration before taking a decision for recovery of 12 per cent on the gross sales turnover of the catering/vending stalls at small and roadside stations;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to relax the recovery from 12 per cent to 8 per cent from catering/vending stalls at small and roadside stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. while rationalising the percentage of licence fee for catering/vending units uniformly on Indian Railways, all the relevant factors *viz.* sale turnover, location of the unit, building/land rent, conservancy charges etc. were taken into consideration. Accordingly, a uniform lumpsum licence fee was decided to be 12% of the sales turnover in case of all static/mobile units incfcjding catering/ vending stalls at small and roadside stations.

(c) No, Sir.